



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2022-0510; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-00158-R]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD)

Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, and EC135T3 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of the air conditioning system (ACS) malfunctioning. This proposed AD would require deactivating the ACS and prohibit installing the affected parts, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference (IBR). The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.
- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For EASA material that is proposed for IBR in this NPRM, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. For Airbus Helicopters service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. The EASA material is also available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0510.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0510; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the EASA AD, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie Sunderbruch, Aerospace Engineer, Safety Risk Management Section, Systems Policy Branch, Policy & Innovation Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-4659; email Stephanie.L.Sunderbruch@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2022-0510; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-00158-R” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data.

The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Stephanie Sunderbruch, Aerospace Engineer, Safety Risk Management Section, Systems Policy Branch, Policy & Innovation Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-4659; email Stephanie.L.Sunderbruch@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2022-0023, dated February 3, 2022 (EASA AD 2022-0023), to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) (formerly Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH, Eurocopter España S.A.) Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, EC135T3, EC635T2+, EC635P2+, EC635P3, EC635T1, and EC635T3 helicopters, all variants, serial numbers (S/N) from 0008 to 0869 inclusive, except S/N 0831 and S/N 0864.

This proposed AD was prompted by reports of the ACS malfunctioning; investigation into the malfunction has identified that certain ACS soft start units are the root cause. The FAA is proposing this AD to address malfunctioning ACSs. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in an overvoltage of the ACS, resulting in overheating of the surrounding area, failure of the helicopter electrical system connected to the ACS, and a subsequent loss of electrical power which could result in increased pilot workload and reduced helicopter control. See EASA AD 2022-0023 for additional background information.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2022-0023 requires deactivating the ACS soft start unit part number (P/N) ES59185-2 on helicopters with a compressor/condenser pallet P/N 135-0553-1 or P/N 135-0566-2 installed. EASA AD 2022-0023 also prohibits installing soft start unit P/N ES59185-2 or a compressor/condenser pallet P/N 135-0553-1 or P/N 135-0566-2 on any helicopter.

This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Other Related Service Information

The FAA reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin ASB EC135-21A-024, Revision 0, dated February 2, 2022. This service information specifies procedures for deactivating the soft part unit of the compressor/condenser pallet and specifies that compressor/condenser pallet P/N 135-0553-1 or 135-0566-2 with soft start unit P/N ES59185-2 installed must not be installed on any helicopter.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA is proposing this AD after evaluating all known relevant information and determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type designs.

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2022-0023, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD and except as discussed under “Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD.”

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA’s ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2022-0023 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2022-0023 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2022-0023 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2022-0023. Service information referenced in EASA AD 2022-0023 for compliance will be available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0510 after the FAA final rule is published.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD

EASA 2022-0023 applies to Model EC635P2+, EC635P3, EC635T1, EC635T2+, and EC635T3 helicopters, whereas this proposed AD would not because these models are not FAA type-certificated and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet except where the U.S. type certificate data sheet explains that the Model EC635T2+ helicopter having serial number 0858 was converted from Model EC635T2+ to Model EC135T2+.

Interim Action

The FAA considers this proposed AD would be an interim action. The design approval holder is currently developing a modification that will address the unsafe condition identified in this AD. Once this modification is developed, approved, and available, the FAA might consider additional rulemaking.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 341 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD.

Deactivating the ACS would take about 1 work-hour, for an estimated cost of \$85 per helicopter and up to \$28,985 for the U.S. fleet.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

(1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD): Docket No. FAA-2022-0510; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-00158-R.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, and EC135T3 helicopters, serial numbers (S/N) from 0008 to 0869 inclusive, except S/N 0831 and S/N 0864, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code 2100, Air Conditioning System.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by reports of the air conditioning system (ACS) malfunctioning. The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent possible overheating of the ACS. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in an overvoltage of the ACS, resulting in overheating of the surrounding area, failure of the helicopter electrical system connected to the ACS, and a subsequent loss of electrical power which could result in increased pilot workload and reduced helicopter control.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2022-0023, dated February 3, 2022 (EASA AD 2022-0023).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2022-0023

(1) Where EASA AD 2022-0023 requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(2) Where EASA AD 2022-0023 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(3) This AD does not mandate compliance with the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2022-0023.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2022-0023 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the

manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(k) Related Information

(1) For EASA AD 2022-0023, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0510.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Stephanie Sunderbruch, Aerospace Engineer, Safety Risk Management Section, Systems Policy Branch, Policy & Innovation Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-4659; email Stephanie.L.Sunderbruch@faa.gov.

Issued on April 30, 2022.

Gaetano A. Sciortino, Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2022-09683 Filed: 5/9/2022 8:45 am; Publication Date: 5/10/2022]